

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sheldon (Shelley) Silver, speaker, New York State Assembly; Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party; and former President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Statement on National Disability Mentoring Day
October 25, 2000

Today, on National Disability Mentoring Day, I commend the members of my administration and the public and private organizations across the Nation that are conducting mentoring activities to help expand employment opportunities for young people with disabilities. I also applaud the young people participating in Mentoring Day and extend my special congratulations to the winners of the Disability Mentoring Day Essay Contest. Each participant has helped advance the goal of today's effort to expose young people with disabilities to a variety of career options, while acquainting employers with the contributions that this future talent pool can make.

I am pleased to report that my administration is taking specific actions to help more people with disabilities participate in the workforce. These steps include new public-private partnerships to close the digital divide for people with disabilities and a variety of grants to advance the goals of the landmark Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act I signed last year.

I am also glad to report important progress in both Federal and private sector initiatives to hire more people with disabilities. First, the Federal Government is on track to meet the goal I announced on the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act to hire 100,000 more persons with disabilities over 5 years. Second, CEO's of a dozen major companies are leading the way by pledging to support the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of individuals with disabilities.

Together, these important steps represent a powerful statement about what we can accomplish when Federal, State, and private sector partners work together toward the full inclusion of people with disabilities in our

Nation's historic economic growth and prosperity. Hiring people with disabilities is not just the right thing to do. It's good for business; it's good for communities; and it's good for all Americans.

Statement on the Need for Congressional Action on the "Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act"
October 25, 2000

It is long past time that we correct several injustices and provide fairness in our immigration system by enacting the "Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act." This legislation is a straightforward proposal to keep families together and to make our immigration policies more equitable. This legislation would help individuals and their families who have been living for many years in the United States and have developed strong ties to their communities to adjust their immigration status. My administration has been trying to negotiate with Republicans, but unfortunately, current Republican proposals would not help most of the immigrants that would get relief under the "Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act," and would perpetuate the current patchwork of contradictory and unfair immigration policies. These injustices should be corrected by Congress before they adjourn this year. If these issues are not resolved, I will veto the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations.

Statement on the Irish Republican Army's Decision on Arms Inspections
October 25, 2000

I was very pleased to learn today of the IRA's announcement that it has decided to allow a repeat inspection of a number of its arms dumps. This constitutes an important and timely confidence-building measure as part of a process initiated by the IRA aimed at putting its arms completely and verifiably beyond use. I welcome the IRA's statement that it has not broken off contact with the de Chastelain Commission, and I hope discussions with the Commission will resume at the earliest possible opportunity. I urge

all parties to work together and in cooperation with the British and Irish Governments to build on the genuine progress that has already been achieved in implementing the Good Friday accord, by restoring momentum toward full implementation of all its provisions within the agreed timeframe.

Statement on the Bombing of Civilians in Southern Sudan

October 25, 2000

I am deeply concerned by reports that the Government of Sudan is bombing innocent civilians in the southern part of the country. Last week Government aircraft dropped munitions on a village while an international relief agency was distributing food. International relief workers report that the Government of Sudan has bombed civilian and humanitarian locations more than 60 times during the past year.

Such egregious abuses have become commonplace in Sudan's ongoing civil war, which has already claimed over 2 million lives. If the Government of Sudan seeks to demonstrate to the international community that it is prepared to act according to international norms and the rule of law, it must allow full and immediate access for humanitarian organizations seeking to provide relief to Sudan's war-ravaged civilians.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Older Americans Act

October 25, 2000

I applaud the House of Representatives for today's overwhelming bipartisan vote to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (H.R. 782). Our Nation's older Americans have been waiting for more than 5 years for Congress to approve this critical legislation. Now that the House has acted, it is imperative that the Senate pass this important legislation before it adjourns.

The Older Americans Act is the cornerstone of our Nation's commitment to senior citizens. Seniors all across the country rely on vital OAA in-home and community-based

services, including home delivered meals, nursing home ombudsmen, and employment and transportation services that are essential to preserve their dignity and independence.

I am also pleased that the House bill includes the new National Family Caregiver Support Program, proposed by this administration to help hundreds of thousands of family members who are struggling to care for their older or disabled relatives. The Senate must do its part to pass this legislation without further delay.

Statement on Congressional Action on the Foreign Operations Appropriations Legislation

October 25, 2000

I commend the House and Senate for passing a foreign operations bill today that supports our efforts to promote peace and stability around the world, in turn helping to make our Nation more safe and secure.

I am particularly pleased that this legislation funds our landmark initiative to provide debt relief to the poorest of the world's nations. Our commitment to debt relief gives these poorest countries a critical opportunity to combine reform with funds to reduce poverty and provide basic health care and education for their people. I applaud the efforts of all those across the political spectrum who joined forces to secure this vital funding.

I also am pleased that this legislation increases funding to fight HIV/AIDS. In nations around the world, HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death and is undermining decades of effort to reduce mortality, improve health, expand educational opportunities, and lift people out of poverty.

This legislation also helps strengthen our efforts to support democracy and stability in southeastern Europe, the Newly Independent States, and other key regions. It includes additional resources to combat terrorism and nuclear proliferation. It also provides increases for our Peace Corps volunteers around the world and for the Export-Import Bank, which supports the export of American products overseas.